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INVENTOR: Phil Felman

FILED: 04/06/2001

APPLICATION NO.: 09/827,594

EXAMINER: Salad Elli Abdullahi

PHONE NUMBER OF EXAMINER: 571-272-4009

ART UNIT: 2157

TITLE OF INVENTION: Method and Apparatus for Providing a Personal Information Directory on the Internet So As to Reveal Personal Information on a Selective Basis

TITLE OF INVENTION APPEARING ON PTO WEBSITE: Method and apparatus for selectively releasing personal contact information stored in an electronic or telephonic database

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April 29, 2005

REPLY TO DETAILED OFFICE ACTION

INVENTOR: Hillel Felman

FILING DATE: 04/06/2001

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EXAMINER: Salad Elli Abdullahi

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April 28, 2005

Dear Sir:

With regards to your detailed office action.

1. Paragraph 1 requires no action.

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2. Claim 3 was accidentally dependent on itself. This was in error, and it was mean to depend off of claim 2. The claim has been amended to reflect this.

3. Paragraph 3 is recitation of 35 U.S.C. §102 (e), stating that it forms the basis of the rejection.

4. The examiner cites Salzfass et al., for rejection of claims 1-3, 8-10, and 12-178. [Claims 7 and 11 are rejected with an obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 in Paragraphs 5 and 6.] A detailed response follows:

It is worth noting generally the differences between the instant application and Salzfass. Salzfass is directed at delivering "an improved system and method . . .for routing an otherwise undeliverable e-mail message to an intended recipient." Salzfass paragraph [0002]. The instant application is directed to responding to a querying signal requesting information about the listed party. In sort of brute terms, the querying signal in the instant application is a signal saying, "I would like to know your e-mail address, telephone number, or other personal contact information, would you please provide it?" That is, it is a request for personal contact information of the listing party by a party querying for that information—an event nowhere present in the Salzfass application.

The querying signal (i.e. the request for personal contact information) in the instant invention also incorporates identifying information about the requesting party. I.e., one has to disclose who he or she is when requesting the personal contact information through a querying signal. Thus the querying signal is sort of, and this is just one embodiment of the invention, "Hi, this John Decker of Anne

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Drive, Pittsfield, MA. I am looking for the present phone number, physical address, and e-mail of Jane Dougherty, could I please have it?"

Salzfass simply does not do this. An e-mail is sent, which could be just about any e-mail not providing identifying personal information, such as an e-mail from footballfan35@hotmail.com. The usual purpose of an e-mail is to impart information or otherwise normally communicate and converse, not make a specific query for personal information.

The problem in Salzfass was when there are problems with the e-mail of the recipient no longer being valid. For instance, there could be domain name errors (the domain name of the e-mail address, the part after the "@"), whereby the domain name is not valid and does not represent an existing server. This would occur, for instance, if Microsoft stopped "hotmail" and "@hotmail" was no longer a valid domain name. This could easily occur when the domain name is the name of a no longer existing company or law firm. Or there could be a name error where the domain part is correct (the text after the "@")—such as hotmail still existing—but the name before the "@" is incorrect. In the instant invention, the querying party does not make an initial mistake of sending a no longer valid e-mail—in the preferred embodiment; he or she knows exactly where he intends to send a message.

Salzfass is roughly sort of the electronic way of forwarding e-mails from a no longer valid e-mail address to a good one, just as one would forward regular post office

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mail by providing a good address, but electronically. In Salzfass, one does not know the e-mail address is bad before one sends the e-mail, and there is certainly is no active querying for contact information as in the present invention. Basically, the Salzfass device has a global e-mail database and an e-mail forwarding server. Presumably, if "footballfan35@hotmail.com" no longer exists, the Salzfass invention purports, to do the forwarding either automatically, or with an option of the intended e-mail recipient formally of "footballfan35@hotmail.com" selecting which e-mails will be forwarded to his or her new e-mail account at "footballfan35@aol.com." This is done completely invisible to the person who initially sent the e-mail to "footballfan35@hotmail.com," and the original sender, perhaps using the e-mail address "trucker580@verizon.net," certainly does not disclose his or her identifying information. The very object of the present invention is to provide access to a database of personal contact information by a querying party seeking such information (not done in Salzfrass, there is just forwarding), with the listing party being a gatekeeper of whether the querying party will get or not get this information. Put another way, in Salzfrass there is no equivalent of a Personal Contact Information Signal sent to the querying party—i.e., the actual human being that made the initial inquiry of contact information—as in the instant Felman invention disclosed in his application.

Salzfass also purports to have a "filtering option, which is discussed in the last sentence of paragraph [0062], stating, "Thus, the DB+FS 170 can act as a filter through which the intended recipient can automatically and

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